

proved that the vitality of our democracy can shape the oldest of our values to the needs and obligations of changing times." I'm confident that the Medicare Commission will help us to build a new consensus to meet the challenges of a new era, strengthening Medicare for the 21st century and giving our people the security they need to thrive.

I'd like to thank Senator Breaux for agreeing to chair the Commission. He has a long-standing record, both in his work on the Aging Commission and the Finance Committee—the Aging Committee and the Finance Committee—of working to develop consensus on important issues affecting our senior citizens.

I'd also like to thank Congressman Thomas for his leadership on this issue and on the Commission. He is well known for his expertise on the Medicare program. He shepherded the Medicare provisions in the Balanced Budget Act through and helped to assure that we could achieve bipartisan agreement on these reforms. And for that I am very, very grateful.

So I'd like now to give the Vice President and Senator Breaux and Congressman Thomas a chance to say a few words.

[At this point, the Vice President, Senator John B. Breaux, and Representative William M. Thomas made brief remarks.]

President's Deposition

Q. Mr. President, are you upset by the leaking of your Jones deposition—or did you people actually do the leaking?

The President. Well, let me say, the court has made it absolutely clear that it is illegal to leak or to discuss it. And I think, Mr. Donaldson, [Sam Donaldson, ABC News] I should follow the law. And so I don't have anything else to say. I know you've got to ask the question; it's your job. But I'm going to just do my job. That's what I'm doing here. And I'm going to follow the law. That's what I wish everyone else would do.

Q. Sir, you never answered the important questions that I think a lot of people out there would like to hear you on it.

The President. Well, I believe I have given all the answers that matter. And I don't have anything else to say at this time. I'm just going to go back and do my job.

Q. Mr. President, do you stand by the facts in the deposition as reported by the newspaper?

Senator John D. Rockefeller IV. Do you care what Medicare is, Sam? Do you care what Medicare is?

Q. We all care, sir. Mr. President, it says in the deposition as reported that you asked Betty Currie to see if she could help Monica Lewinsky get a job.

The President. For one thing, I haven't read the article. For another thing, I don't know whether the article is accurate or not. Finally, whether it is or not, it is against the law. The judge has ordered us neither to release such materials or to discuss them. Somebody in this case ought to follow the law. I intend to be that person, so that I can go back to work about these things. I have nothing else to say.

Q. Things have gotten very personal between you and Kenneth Starr, Mr. President. It seems to have gotten very personal between you and Kenneth Starr, Mr. President. I'm asking a question not about the deposition.

The President. Sam never quits. He never quits.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on the House Banking Committee Vote on Funding for the International Monetary Fund

March 5, 1998

I want to congratulate members of both parties in the House Banking Committee who have voted to give the International Monetary Fund the resources it needs to deal with the risks to financial stability around the world. This bipartisan legislation will help ensure that the IMF has the funds it needs to protect American jobs and exports.

The American economy continues to demonstrate its remarkable strength, and we must do everything we can to keep it on a path of steady growth. That is why we will work to build broad bipartisan support for this legislation as it moves forward in Congress. It is vital that the Congress move as

quickly as possible to support full funding for the IMF.

Remarks at the Screening of “Earth to the Moon”

March 5, 1998

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to all. Thank you, John Kennedy, for those wonderful remarks. Thank you, Jeff Bewkes, for taking a chance on this project. I know it's a big, big project. I predict it will get a big, big response from the American people. Thank you, Tom Hanks, and thank all of you who were part of this.

I'd also like to thank the people at NASA, with whom you worked—I'm sure many of them are here—for the work they do every day. I thank all the astronauts who are here. And we're especially proud of Lieutenant Colonel Eileen Collins, who will be our first woman mission leader very soon.

There's not much more that needs to be said. But as one of the graduates of the class of 1968, I want to thank all of you for saving 1968 all over again. *[Laughter]*

Hillary, today, when we honored Eileen Collins, pointed out that when she was a young girl she wrote off to NASA and asked for information about how to be an astronaut. And she was told that, at the time, women were not welcome in the program. Today, we see that change.

The growth of the space program and the way it's changed and strengthened is in many ways evidence of the growth of America over the last three decades. And I think any of us who had anything to do with it have been profoundly proud of it. Hillary mentioned the Mars mission that seemed, once again, to sort of spark the popular imagination in our Nation for the space program with the wonderful *Sojourner* looking around for red rocks with wonderful names like Scooby Doo. *[Laughter]*

You know, the international space station will be up before long, and it will literally be the size of a football field. Now, the vehicle John Glenn went up in over 35 years ago was about the size of a compact car. And when the space station is there, it will change forever the way people can relate to the

Earth and to the other planets in the solar system. All of this has happened for a lot of reasons.

There are Members of Congress here, and I thank them for their presence. Congress continued to support the space station and space program against the kinds of criticisms that are still current today that John so eloquently chronicled from the 1960's. President Kennedy wanted us to become the world's leading spacefaring nation, and we have. I want us to continue that distinction well into the 21st century. It is profoundly important to us. Colonel Collins, for example, will lead us in an effort to launch a telescope that will allow us to peer into the deepest reaches of outer space. The new balanced budget will support 28 more space missions, to help us decipher more of the mysteries of black holes, of ancient stars, of the Earth itself.

The knowledge we gain from these missions will help us to solve problems here on Earth, from osteoporosis to ovarian cancer. It will help to make our farms more productive. It will help us to deal with the crisis of global warming. And as the distinguished scientist Stephen Hawking, who will be in this place tomorrow night, has pointed out, it may well help us uncover the very origins of human life itself.

I hope all of you who are part of this project will be able to look back 10, 20, 30, 40 years from now with immense pride that you have once again sparked the imagination, the dreams, the hopes, and the courage of the American people to follow our astronauts into space and to follow our imaginations wherever they lead.

Thank you, and God bless you.

There are so many wonderful people here tonight, I hesitate to acknowledge anyone. But someone who helped us all get through that era is here: Walter Cronkite, thank you very much for your presence.

And now Hillary and I would like to invite you all into the State Dining Room for a reception, where we will try to stay on both feet, on the ground. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, and bless you. Let's go in.